

Interim Supply

was in the hands of those in the minister's office for at least three weeks.

Mr. Hellyer: That is not correct.

Mr. Lambert: I was checking daily with the clerk. I know it took about two weeks to type it up and get it over to the minister, and then there was the question of the security checks. But it was in the minister's office for three weeks while he was in Europe.

Mr. Hellyer: I had it for only two days.

Mr. Lambert: The minister may have had it for only two days, but it was in the hands of the members of his office for three weeks. That is completely indefensible.

Another matter is this. It is only the minister or his assistant who is allowed to check the blues of the testimony given. None of the members can see what they have said or whether or not it makes sense. But apparently the minister or his executive assistant can do all the doctoring up they like, the fine polishing, of the testimony given before this committee.

With regard to the testimony given on June 23, it is very difficult to assert that the remarks of any given member or any questions he may have asked have all been included because there is no way of checking. It is very difficult some weeks later when you see the report to say that this is exactly what you have said or that something has not been changed. This is what I object to.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member should not cast any aspersions here. He knows that there is a tape recording in existence and the whole thing is there. He should not give the impression that there is any possibility of doctoring or changing what was said because the tape recording can be produced to a committee of this house at any time.

Mr. Lambert: Then I ask the minister whether it is available. The minister does not know whether it is available and is kept.

Mr. Hellyer: I do not know but I assume it is, and I am sure it will be available for the purpose of—

Mr. Lambert: That is an assumption made by the minister. He assumes it is kept for verification purposes. In saying that, the minister must know that he should spell out the procedure whereby a member of the house can have the tape played back in order

[Mr. Lambert.]

to verify the transcript of his evidence. This is something I would point out. Particularly when a transcript of evidence has been vetted for security reasons, the question arises: How has the transcript been examined?

My colleagues are going to deal with the constitutionality of the actions of the government. This being the second time I have spoken in this debate, I must say I should like to hear the chairman of the committee reply to the questions I put to him the other night as to when he actually heard, directly or indirectly, about the change in the testimony of Admiral Landymore. This matter is highly important to his relationship with the committee, because until the committee report was presented to the house about one week after June 29 there would still have been an opportunity for the committee to meet, if there had been an intimation that the testimony had been changed, and to do something about it. I think the government is taking a woefully wrong course in this regard.

With regard to unification, basically I do not like it but I will say this. I would be a lot more satisfied, and so would the members of the opposition, if we could hear from various service officers, both serving and past officers, and also from outside witnesses as to how this unification is going to affect Canada's forces. The present situation cannot continue. Hundreds of men of experience are leaving every month, and are being replaced by recruits. This is not good enough for the professional force that we have to have.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated on orders of the day, I should like to say a few words about interim supply. The first thing I should like to say is that it is a wonderful thing a Conservative convention is going on because I have not seen so many members of the official opposition in their seats since I became a member of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege. I have always admired the sense of humour of the Minister of National Revenue, who is now engaging in a form of comedy. But he knows he should have said he is sorry so many Conservatives are absent this afternoon because there is a convention in progress. The people who are here are holding the fort for their colleagues. The minister knows better than that, so let us have the truth. We have not had it so far today, but let us have the truth now.